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DISCUSSION

TESTING HIGH-SCHOOL PUPILS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE

J. C. NELSON

The High School, Marshalltown, Iowa

Mr. Dorey's very interesting article in the December number of the *School Review* stimulated me to try a similar experiment with our young people, the results of which are given below. The questions were given to the Senior class (which averages eighteen years) at its regular period for English. The class, consisting of fifty pupils, is in two sections, and I therefore divided the list of allusions into two parts. For Mr. Dorey's number five I substituted this quotation from "As You Like It":

Marry, his kisses are Judas' own children.

The others I took verbatim as Mr. Dorey used them.¹ Section 1 of the

¹ List of biblical allusions used in the test:

1. "Or memorize another Golgotha."
—*Macbeth*, Act I, scene 2, 1, 40.
2. "Here feel we but the penalty of Adam."
—*As You Like It*, Act I, scene 1, 1, 5.
3. ". the great King of Kings
Hath in the tables of his law commanded
That thou shalt do no murder."
—*King Richard III*, Act I, scene 4, 1, 200.
4. "And that one talent, which is death to hide
Lodged with the useless."
—*Sonnet*, "On His Blindness."
5. "Marry, his kisses are Judas' own children."
—*As You Like It*, Act III, scene 4, 9.
6. "Through this concession my full cup runs o'er."
—*The Ring and the Book*, Book IX, 1, 148.
7. "How bloody Herod slew these innocents."
—*The Ring and the Book*, Book IX, 1, 136.
8. "Follow Light and do the Right, for man can half control his doom—
Till you see the deathless angel seated in the vacant tomb."
—"Locksley Hall, Sixty Years After."
9. "And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand."
—"Godiva."
10. "Than that earth should stand at gaze, like Joshua's moon in Ajalon."
—"Locksley Hall."

class exhausted its five questions in the 45 minutes, and took two more; Section 2 was only able to cover five. The result follows:

Allusion No. 1 was given to 50 pupils; 15 answered correctly, 12 incorrectly, 23 omitted it entirely; percentage of correct answers, 30.

No. 2 was given to 23; 18 correct, 3 incorrect, 2 omitted; percentage of correctness, 78.

No. 3 was given to 23; 21 correct, 2 incorrect; percentage of correctness, 91.

No. 4 was given to 23; 7 correct, 8 incorrect, 8 omitted; percentage of correctness, 30.

No. 5 given to 27; 14 correct, 5 incorrect, 8 omitted; percentage of correctness, 52.

No. 6 given to 27; 17 correct, 3 incorrect, 7 omitted; percentage of correctness, 42.

No. 7 given to 50; 21 correct, 21 incorrect, 8 omitted; percentage of correctness, 42.

No. 8 given to 27; 13 correct, 6 incorrect, 8 omitted; percentage of correctness, 48.

No. 9 given to 27; 6 correct, 11 incorrect, 10 omitted; percentage of correctness, 22.

No. 10 given to 27; 7 correct, 8 incorrect, 12 omitted; percentage of correctness, 26.

The percentage of correctness for the whole list would thus be about 48, coinciding very closely with Mr. Dorey's result. By marking the papers as I would any set of examination papers, I get an average of 53.1 per cent. in one section, and 50.6 per cent. in the other; but I gave credit here for a good deal of rather vague expression, which accounts for the higher average.

The individual averages ran all the way from 0 to 100. Only one made 100; two, between 90 and 100; three, 80 to 90; eight, 70 to 80; four, 60 to 70; eight, 50 to 60; ten, 40 to 50; three, 30 to 40; five, 20 to 30; five, 10 to 20; one 0.

Of the 27 who undertook the discussion of No. 6, 14 named the psalm as the twenty-third, and one called it the Shepherd Psalm. Not one identified the commandment in No. 3 as the sixth.

Some of the "gems":

Peter betrayed Christ if Judas didn't, and if Peter was Judas' son the simile would be better explained.

Herod slewing the innocents refers to the time when all Christian babies under two years of age were to be killed.

The salms were written by Solomon.

Joshua gazed at the moon and had a dream or vision of some kind.

Esau had a twin brother who was the older of the two.

Golgotha was one of the bloodiest battles in Bible history.

The poor woman who had only one talent to give to the Lord.

Golgotha was where Samson slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.

When sin came into the world, the days changed from extreme heat to extreme cold, which was the penalty of Adam.

Golgotha was the leader of the giants who inhabited the promised land before the Israelites came to it.

The Ten Commandments were made by Christ and he gave them to his disciples and the people.

Golgotha was a heathen god to whom the people offered living sacrifices.

A rumor came to Herod that the child Joseph should become king.

Esau sold his birthright for some porridge.

New York City, January 4, 1909

To the Editor of the "School Review":

Two recent articles in the *School Review*, one by Professor Charles Knapp, and the other by Mr. G. H. Browne, have referred favorably and unfavorably to my recently published *Vocabulary of High-School Latin*, and inasmuch as my attitude has not been made clear in these articles I should like very much to state it briefly if you can find room for it in your pages.

1. Prescription of vocabulary is as logical as prescription of forms and syntax; the knowledge of the three elements of speech is essential for translation.

2. The prescription of 2,000 words is based on the assumption that the acquisition of 500 words is all that can reasonably be expected in one year in the high school and an ordinary high-school course is four years in length.

3. This prescription does not mean that more than this may not be learned or that the vocabulary of any one year should be limited to only 500 words.

4. My list was made from the authors' read in nine-tenths of the high schools in the country. Mr. Browne's list was made from the study of the whole of Caesar, Cicero, Nepos, Sallust, etc., and it is noteworthy, as he himself admits, that approximately 1,900 of my 2,000 words are words of frequent occurrence in his list. This proves conclusively that these 1,900 words embody nine-tenths of the vocabulary of ordinary Latin.

5. The prescription of such a list does not mean that the high-school teacher must read the authors from which it is drawn. By reason of its fundamental character the high-school teacher has almost unlimited freedom in the choice of material. It was to provide this freedom that my list was primarily prepared.

6. It makes no difference to me what list is prescribed for entrance examinations, provided it is of fundamental value. Before this can be determined a more extensive study of Latin usage is necessary. My book professes only to supply material. The preparation of a definitive list might well be left to some duly appointed body.

GONZALEZ LODGE